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Marcos Says U.S. Actions Help Divide His Army

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MANILA, Dec. 16 — President Ferdinand E. Marcos said today that American pressure to remove the Chief of Staff, Gen. Fabian C. Ver, had contributed to a factional dispute that was hampering the work of the Philippine military.

Mr. Marcos, who despite American pressure reinstated General Ver, said in an interview that he expected the general to be removed from his post soon.

General Ver was reinstated on Dec. 3, the day after he was acquitted on charges of involvement in the assassi-

nation of the opposition leader Benigno S. Aquino Jr. in 1983.

Mr. Marcos said he was prepared to file charges if necessary against senior military officers to help resolve the dispute, which pits General Ver against Lieut. Gen. Fidel V. Ramos. General Ramos is General Ver's deputy and served in his place during the general's yearlong leave.

"We have never admitted this, but followers of General Ver, followers of General Ramos, they are all sitting on their haunches, they are watching each other," Mr. Marcos said.

He said: "I called the two generals and told them, 'I want you to call all these people and tell them this has got to end. Otherwise, I'm going to kick out everybody and put in new men.'"

Mr. Marcos's disclosure of a rift was the first confirmation of factional troubles in the Philippine military. Hints of the problem have been disclosed to outsiders, but Mr. Marcos is the first official to say it is hampering the military's performance.

"The whole armed forces is slowed down by factionalism," he said.

Mr. Marcos said he told his generals he was concerned about some "lapses of intelligence and discipline."

The United States had pressed Mr. Marcos not to reinstate General Ver and is now pressing for his early removal, saying the return of a man who is seen as symbolizing political patronage in the military would set back efforts for change.

The President has hinted that the reinstatement of General Ver is temporary but has declined to say definitely that he would be removed.

Asked today if General Ver would retain his post through elections scheduled for Feb. 7, Mr. Marcos said: "I doubt it. I would like to settle this problem as soon as possible, and when I say as soon as possible, it may happen next week. It may happen the week after that."

He implied that General Ver would stay on as a consultant even if he is removed from his command.

In his year as Acting Chief of Staff, General Ramos became the focus for hopes for change. He hinted that he would consider resigning his commission if General Ver were reinstated.

Reorganizing the Military

The President earlier announced a top-to-bottom reorganization of the military, but some officers have dismissed it as a ploy to deflect American criticism of General Ver's reinstatement and of the discipline, training and performance of the military.

The day after General Ver's reinstatement, Mr. Marcos said, the two generals and some of their supporters confronted each other in the President's office, where he had called them to "put your hair down."

Mr. Marcos said: "I told them I don't intend to scandalize the armed forces. But if necessary, I will. I'm going to file charges against anyone who doesn't follow orders."

"Well, they have cooled down," the President said. "I told them the facts of life. There is no rivalry."

He quoted the two generals as saying: "Both of us will probably resign together. And we leave it to the President who should be Chief of Staff." He said he had given them a list of names

from which to make recommendations for their replacements.

The President said the American pressure not to reinstate General Ver had caused a backlash among his military supporters and their rivals, both of whom he said had begun to "hold back" in the performance of their duties, waiting for a resolution of the situation.

Asked if this was harming the battle against insurgency, Mr. Marcos said: "Oh, they would fight. But they wouldn't follow the initiative. They wouldn't receive the surrenderees. And I told them, 'This is treasonable, and if this continues I'm going to throw the book at you.' But I first told the two generals, 'You know the problems, now you get to work at this.'"

He said General Ver had asked to be reinstated only after his acquittal so he could recover his honor and good name, and offered to resign the same day.

"I said, 'No, you've got some problems to settle,' because of course there was a confrontation on policies."

Sources of Friction

One such confrontation, he said, came over General Ver's desire to keep the Philippine Constabulary as a garrison force that would not come in contact with civilians, and General Ramos's attempts to retrain and organize several battalions.

Mr. Marcos said that the day after General Ver was reinstated, "the board of generals confronted each other, including General Ramos and General Ver, and General Ver asked some very penetrating questions."

On that day, Mr. Marcos said, he asked the generals what was happening with soldiers who have organized a reformist group within the ranks. He said he also asked: "'What is the cause of the lapses of intelligence and discipline? Why does our intelligence seem to leak out? And who's talking to the C.I.A. without my permission? Things like that.'"

Taking part in the interview, which was conducted at Malacanang Palace, were A. M. Rosenthal, executive editor of The New York Times, and Warren Hoge, the newspaper's foreign editor.

Rebel Threat Called Exaggerated

In other part of the interview, Mr. Marcos said Western worries about advances in guerrilla activities were exaggerated, probably because foreign analysts were not familiar enough with the situation. "Not in 3 or 5 or 10 years will they be able to reach what they call a strategic stalemate," he said of the rebels.

Despite official assurances to the contrary, he said, some Americans have become actively involved in supporting the political opposition led by Corazon C. Aquino, Mr. Aquino's widow. After suggesting that the Central Intelligence Agency might be among these people, he said, he had received assurances that there would be no financial support for anyone.

Asked if his wife, Imelda, might use a loophole in the election law to substitute for his vice-presidential candidate, Arturo M. Tolentino, Mr. Marcos said, "No way, no way." He said he and his wife and the party's leadership had agreed to make "an open declaration that she is not seeking office in this or any other coming election."

Reacting to a statement by Mrs. Aquino that she would probably put him on trial for the killing of her husband if she won the election, he said, "I realize she has nerve, but this is a little bit much."

"This would provoke repercussions," he said, suggesting that the court would not issue a warrant and the police would not arrest him if she moved against him.

"This indicates the vindictive, vengeful mood which motivates their bid for the presidency," he said. "And it is not for the public welfare, but apparently to get even with me."

"She doesn't need to wait for the elections," Mr. Marcos added. "Why doesn't she file the case now, so we can settle this once and for all."